GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2399
ANSWERED ON:09.08.2005
IMPORT/ EXPORT OF PEPPER
Moorthy Shri A.K.;Thomas Shri P.C.

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the present policy for import of pepper;

(b) whether the Government has declared ban on import of pepper;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the farmers and MPs were consulted before imposing ban on import of pepper;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor;

(f) the total quantity of pepper imported during each of the last three years, quality-wise and country-wise;

(g) whether any action has been taken to save farmers facing hardships due to low price for their product;

(h) whether export of pepper has declined considerably;

(i) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(j) the action taken to increase the export?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN)

(a) All types of pepper covered under Exim Head 0904 of the ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Item, 2004-09 is freely importable, subject to payment of applicable Customs duty.

(b)&(c) Import of duty free pepper except Light Black Pepper has been disallowed under the Advance Licensing Scheme. Domestic sale of pepper and pepper product by Export Oriented Units has also been disallowed. This step has been taken to plug the potential misuse of duty free pepper by way of diversion to the domestic market, thereby affecting prices of the product.

(d)&(e) Several representations have been received from various quarters requesting Government intervention in this regard.

(f) The quantum of pepper imported dviring each of the last three years, category-wise and country-wise are available in the publication entitled `Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India Vol-II (Imports) brought out by Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, Kolkata, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

(g) The government has taken various steps to protect the interests of the farmers. These include a Market Intervention Scheme for procurement of Black Pepper, disallowing issuance of Advance Licenses for import of duty free except for light berries and disallowing domestic sale of pepper and pepper products by Export Oriented Units (EOUs) etc.

(h) to (j) Export of pepper has declined from 16,635 tonnes to 14,150 tonnes in 2004-05 due to stiff price competition with Vietnam and other countries. The Government has taken various steps to boost export of pepper such as post harvest improvement through training and infrastructure development, trade promotion, support for organic farming of pepper, up- gradation of laboratories etc.